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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2006

In Today's Papers

Ocalan Calls for PKK Ceasefire

All papers report imprisoned leader of the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, on Thursday appealed to the PKK to call a ceasefire in its fighting with the Turkish security forces. "I appeal to the PKK to call a ceasefire and not use weapons unless attacked," Ocalan said in a statement relayed to press by his lawyers, adding such a process was "very important to building a democratic union between Turks and Kurds." Ocalan urged Prime Minister Edogun to meet his promises for making Turkey a model for the whole Middle East. He added that the EU and the US should support the ceasefire process, warning that the situation might go out of control if the opportunity for a truce is missed.

Papers comment that the new call by Ocalan might kick off a similar process to the five-year period of non-violence that began with a call by the same PKK leader in 1999. Sabah regards the call as the last phase of a "secret state plan" to liquidate the PKK, with an amnesty to the PKK members not involved in terrorist attacks coming next.

Prime Minister Erdogan rejected Ocalan's call, urging the terrorists instead to abandon their fight against security forces. "A ceasefire is done between states, not with a terrorist organization," Erdogan said in an interview late Thursday with Samanyolu television.

'Greater Kurdistan' Map Crisis

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others report that on September 15, a map showing "Greater Kurdistan" carved out of southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq, Syria and Iran was used in a lecture given by US Colonel Peter Faber at the NATO Defense College in Rome. Turkish officers objected to the map, and walked out of the room after a brief dispute with Colonel Faber. According to papers, General Peter Pace has apologized to Turkish General Staff (TGS) Chief Yasar Buyukanit for the use of the

map. Papers report the US Embassy in Ankara said that the map has nothing to do with official US policies, but that freedom of expression in academies cannot be restricted. Zaman reports the State Department said it did not understand what happened at the academy, stressing it was in no way possible that the US Administration would accept the map.

France Raises Armenian 'Genocide' Claims Again

All papers report that France will debate on October 12 once again a controversial bill for penalizing those who deny the Armenian genocide. The bill had been shelved last May following reactions coming from Turkish and French business groups. A Turkish parliamentary delegation of lawmakers will travel to Paris to campaign against the motion.

In other news, Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Spokesman Namik Tan criticized in a written statement in response to a press question the removal of Turkish-heritage candidates in the Netherlands from party lists for general elections for not accepting the genocide of Armenians at the hands of Ottoman forces in the early years of the last century.

Patriarch Wants Illegal Armenian Residents Educated in Turkish Schools

Hurriyet reported on its front page that Mesrob II, Patriarch of Armenians in Turkey, sent a special letter to PM Erdogan asking him to allow the 30,000 or 40,000 Armenians living in Turkey with the consent of Turkish authorities to have schooling at Armenian schools operated under the Turkish Ministry of Education. Mesrob II also expressed his discontent with Turkey's stance linking all issues of the Armenian community with reciprocity principles established between Turkey and Greece.

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Erdogan Due in the US

Milliyet and Zaman report that on Friday, Prime Minister Erdogan is to depart Ankara for New York on a state visit to the United States.

Erdogan will join a Ramadan fast-breaking dinner (iftar) with the members of the Turkish associations in New York on Friday evening. Erdogan said in an interview with Samanyolu TV last night he would ask for "concrete steps forward" from President Bush with regard to the PKK at a scheduled meeting with the US President at the White House on Monday. On Sunday, he will deliver a speech, "Turkey's message for global peace and justice," at Georgetown University in Washington before giving exclusive interviews to the Washington Post and Fox TV on the same day. Milliyet claims Erdogan will hold a "surprise" meeting with the TGS Chief General Buyukanit before the PM departs for the US early Friday.

Hasan Mesut Hazar commenting from Washington in the conservative Turkiye points out that Turkey needs the US as an ally in the region: "The US is on the eve of an election, complete with heated debates as well as harsh criticism from Democrats of the Bush administration on international issues. Given the current atmosphere in Washington, the US administration is in need of Turkey more than before. Turkey is the only channel for the US administration to reach out to the region - a region where two countries, Iran and Syria, have already been included in the axis of evil. Therefore the US should pay more attention to Turkey's sensitivities and priorities in this region. The upcoming meeting between PM Erdogan and President Bush at the White House is very important for advancing the bilateral ties and also for advancing Turkey's regional influence. Developments in Turkish-American ties not only serve bilateral interests but also are an assurance for the protection of world peace and stability."

Muharrem Sarikaya also comments on the Prime Minister's Washington visit in Sabah, arguing that there are many factors that are "casting a shadow" over the trip: "Unlike during his previous trips to Washington, PM Erdogan does not enjoy full popular support this time as he travels to the US. There are many factors casting a shadow over his trip, such as the recent warnings from the army on fundamentalism, the lack of support from the Jewish lobby due to the Hamas and Al Kadi incidents as well as growing anti-Americanism in Turkey with no interference to change this trend from the ruling

AKP. In general, there are paradoxical situations on both sides which prevent Turkish-American relations from getting fully on track. The recent map crisis at a NATO seminar is only one of the many examples where one can see harm done regardless of apologies or official statements for explanation. Washington, on one hand, expresses discontent due to Ankara's inefficient cooperation in preventing anti-Americanism in Turkey. But on the other hand, the very same Washington takes some action through northern Iraq as if to provoke anti-Americanism even more in Turkey. The Ankara government fails to take measures to properly deal with such crises, and only gets engaged in the situation once the damage is done."

Baykal 'Booed' at Meeting with University Students
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others report opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal was "booed" at a meeting with university students at Kocaeli University in a program televised live Thursday night on Kanal-D TV. Baykal received great applause when criticizing the US and EU, but was booed when he defended Article 301 of Turkish Penal Code, related to freedom of expression, and remarked on Turkey's Kurdish question. "It is mainly due to you and your ilk that Turkey is in this situation," one student yelled at Baykal, drawing the strong reaction of CHP members in the room when he shouted at Baykal to quit the party.

Erdogan Supports Internet, Computer Campaign
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Yeni Safak report Prime Minister Erdogan joined a campaign launched by Turkish IT companies, including Microsoft Turkey, aimed at achieving Internet connection and a

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computer for every household in Turkey. Erdogan said the "honest" use of the Internet would help support global peace whereas the "dishonest" use would support global terrorism. Internet usage in Turkey climbed to 2,5 million as of 2006 from slightly over one million in 2002, and that 16 million had computers.

TV Highlights
NTV (8 a.m.)

Domestic News

- Turkish Air Forces Commander General Faruk Comert warned at the opening of the academic year at the Air College in Ankara that approaches which feed fundamentalism and terrorism will take the nation to catastrophe.
- The chief Turkish EU negotiator Ali Babacan said after meeting with the Italian Foreign Minister D'Alema in Rome that new forward steps with regard to Cyprus might be taken before the end of the year.
- Restaurant and bar owners in Istanbul's tourist district Sultanahmet say they had been asked by the municipality to stop serving alcohol.
- Independent MP Emin Sirin has joined controversial businessman Cem Uzan's Genc Party (GP).
- The number of foreign companies operating in Turkey is estimated 13,000.

International News

- European Union foreign policy chief Solana said he failed to reach a deal with Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Larijani concerning Tehran's nuclear aspirations. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack warned sanctions would not be the first choice but they could go down that path if that's what the Iranian regime wants.
- Israeli Prime Minister Olmert said he hoped to meet Palestinian President Abbas soon for a summit meeting that could help revive peace talks.
- A suicide car bomb attack killed two and injured another five in the oil-rich northern Iraqi town of Kirkuk.

- Al-Qaeda leader in Iraq al-Masri calls in an Internet audio message for explosives experts and nuclear scientists to "join the holy war against West."

- Russia called for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to address Georgia's arrest of five Russian officers on charges of espionage.

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